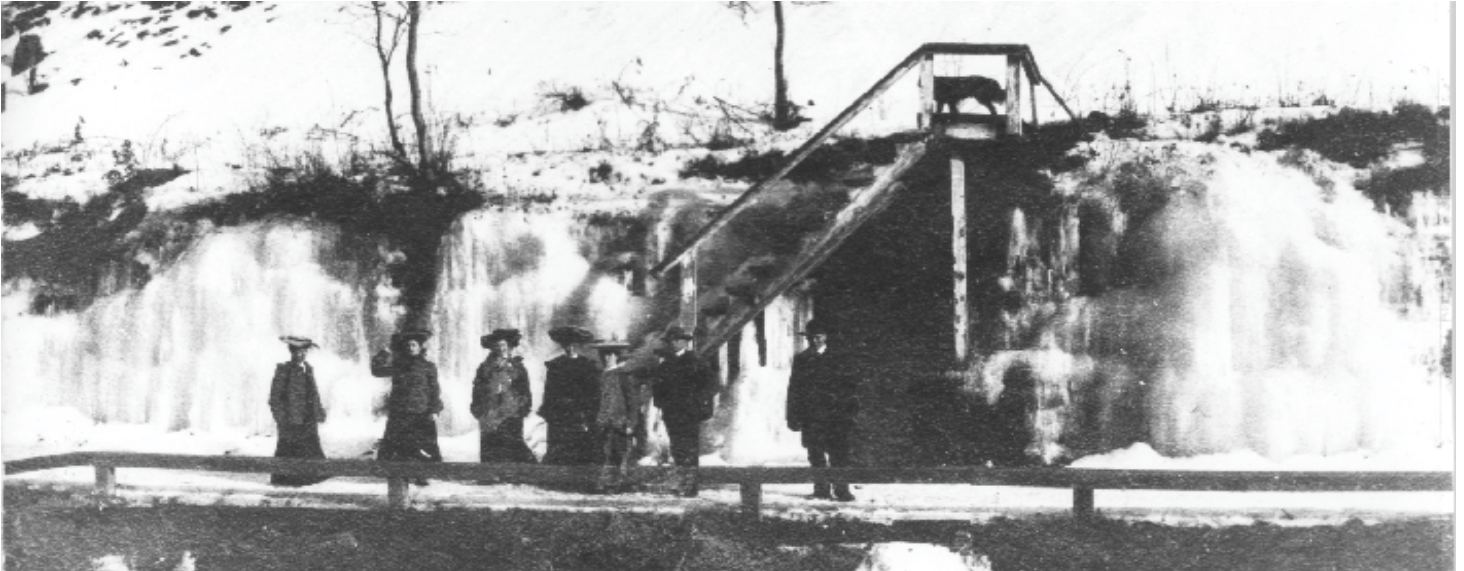




The Canaller

Wintering During the Canal Era



Today, recreational visitors to the C&O Canal National Historical Park sometimes switch from their bicycles to their cross country skis when winter blankets the towpath with snow. For the boatmen and locktenders on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, winter marked the dormant period of the boating year when canal operations shut down and the pace of life slowed from the busy 16 to 18 hour days the canallers put in during the spring, summer and fall months. For the canal company operators, it meant preparing the canal for the winter months ahead and bracing for the spring freshets of melting snow that could lead to flooding along the Potomac River valley and in turn the canal.

The boatmen continued shipping operations along the canal as late as they could before the canal “wintered over” and they were no longer able to make their way east and west along the towpath. Once winter arrived, most boatmen returned to one of the communities along the canal they called home. Hancock, Williamsport, Sharpsburg or Cumberland was home to many of the boatmen. Only a tiny percentage of boatmen actually spent all

year living on a canal boat. For most it was home to spouses, in-laws or parents to spend the winter months, perhaps seeking work to tide them over during the off-season. For the children of the boatmen, winter was their opportunity to attend school. Clifford Swain noted “When we got to school, school had already opened and been runnin’ for three months.” For children of the boatmen that worked on the canal with their fathers, they missed the beginning and end of the school year each year. Boats were dry docked for repairs or parked in one of the basin areas to ride out the winter. Many of the canal mules wintered on farms in Allegany, Washington and Frederick counties in Maryland.

Locktenders were paid employees of the canal company and lived in “company housing” – the lockhouses – year round. Like the boatmen, they frequently sought additional work during the winter months when the canal shutdown. During the boating season, locktenders were on call at whatever time a boat captain appeared day or night to lock through. With this demanding schedule, a break was probably welcome but with several

months of winter, the locktenders no doubt looked forward to the resumption of shipping in the spring.

To prepare the canal for winter, water levels were lowered in the basins and in the ditch in general. Major repairs and dredging of the ditch were usually spring projects. Keeping culverts, waste weirs, aqueducts, lift locks, dams, the Paw Paw Tunnel and miles of clay-lined ditch in shape was a big challenge that was year-round, but winter followed by melting ice and snow created a need for additional work to prepare to reopen the canal for shipping in the spring. “Opening day” varied each year depending on the severity of the winter. Many years the C&O Canal and the Potomac froze over for long periods of time. No doubt by spring the boatmen, locktenders and C&O Canal Company Board of Directors were anxious to resume operations on the canal as their livelihoods depended on moving cargo along the waterway. While the canal may not be as much a part of our lives as it was for the boatmen and locktenders, we too yearn to put away the skis and welcome spring with a bike ride down the familiar towpath!

Planning Your Visit

**The C&O Canal “is a refuge, a place of retreat, a long stretch of quiet and peace...”
– Justice William O. Douglas**

The C&O Canal National Historical Park is one of the largest and most diverse parks within the National Park System. It provides an expansive array of recreational opportunities.

Keep in mind the following before heading out to the canal. **We ask our visitors not to:**

- Harm any living thing or historic object or remove these things from the Park.
- Consume alcoholic beverages in the Park.
- Operate motorized vehicles on the towpath.
- Walk pets without being on 6 foot leash or less.
- Camp in non-designated areas.
- Interfere with canal boat operations on the towpath or in the canal.
- Explore the Park after dark with the exception of the towpath from Seneca to Cumberland and designated camping areas.

We ask our visitors to:

- Take home any trash you generate or find since the park is Trash Free.

Recreational Opportunities on the Canal

Biking the towpath is one of the most popular methods of enjoying the C&O Canal National Historical Park. In general, the towpath is an even hard-packed dirt trail ideal for hiking and biking. The following regulations must be observed:

- Bicyclists under the age of 16 must wear helmets. All others should!
- Bicyclists must yield the right-of-way to all pedestrians, horses and mules.
- Bicyclists must sound a bell or horn and call out before passing pedestrians.
- Bicyclists must walk their bikes over aqueducts and through the Paw Paw Tunnel.
- Groups of bicyclists must ride single file.
- The towpath speed limit is 15 mph.

A towpath detour is in effect at Big Slackwater (mile 84.5 to mile 88.1). Detour roads are narrow and steep in places. Use caution. To obtain more information and maps of the detour, please contact the Williamsport Visitor Center at 301-582-0813.

Boating opportunities include Georgetown to Violettes Lock (mile 0-22); Big Pool (mile 112-113); Hancock (mile 124.1-124.7); Williamsport to Lock 44 (mile 99.8-99.3); Little Pool (mile 120-121) and Oldtown to Town Creek (mile 162-167). Use of electric motorized vessels is allowed at Big Pool, Little Pool, and canal waters between Lock 68 (Oldtown) and Town Creek Aqueduct. Gasoline and propane motorized vessels are prohibited within the park. Personal floatation devices are required by the State of Maryland. Canoeing on the Potomac River can be hazardous and should only be done under the direct supervision of an experienced adult canoeist. To hear a taped message regarding river conditions in the lower Potomac Valley, call 703-260-0305.

Fishing is permitted in accordance with state regulations. For more information, contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources at 301-898-9724 or the District of Columbia Department of Health at 202-535-2260.

Hunting and camping in the park to establish a hunting base is prohibited. Crossing park land to access adjacent hunting areas with unloaded weapons is permitted in designated areas. For more information, see website at www.nps.gov/choh.

Planning Your Visit

Horseback riding is permitted on the towpath from Swains Lock (mile 16.6) to the Offutt Street crossing at Candoc (mile 181.8) in Cumberland. Horses are prohibited through the Paw Paw Tunnel. Use the Tunnel Hill trail to by-pass the tunnel. Riders may not exceed a slow trot. Dismount and walk horses across aqueducts. Horses are prohibited on wooden footbridges, which are not designed to carry their weight. Remove all manure. Grazing is prohibited in the park. Feed for horses must be carried by the group. Watering, cleaning, or tethering horses near park wells is prohibited. Watering is permitted at public river access points (boat ramps). Access from private property is prohibited. Trail-rider camping is permitted at hiker-biker campsites with a limit of six persons, four horses, and one night per visit per site. Tether horses at the furthestmost portion of the campsite away from tent and picnic table locations. Horse trailers are not allowed in drive-in camping areas. Use of boat ramp parking is allowed.

CAMPING

Drive-in campsites are located at McCoy's Ferry, Fifteenmile Creek, and Spring Gap. Primitive sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis at a fee of \$10 per night per site. Camping is limited to eight people, two vehicles, and two tents per campsite. Recreational vehicles are limited to 20 feet. No hookups are available. Facilities at the campsites include a chemical toilet, picnic table and grill. Drinking water is usually available from mid-April through November 15. Visitors are advised to bring water.

Walk-in campgrounds that have adjacent parking are at Antietam Creek and Paw Paw. Sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis for a fee of \$10 per night per site. Camping is limited to eight people, two vehicles and two tents per campsite. Facilities at the campsites include a chemical toilet, picnic table, and grill. Drinking water is available from mid-April through mid-November. Visitors are advised to bring water.

Group campsites are available at McCoys Ferry, Fifteenmile Creek, Spring Gap, and Paw Paw for \$20 per night. No more than 35 people are allowed on the site. Primitive camping is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Marsden Tract group camping is available for overnight use by organized groups. An advance permit is required which costs \$20 per night. Parking for Marsden Tract is 0.5 miles downstream at Carderock. To obtain a permit, call the Great Falls Fee and Permit Office at 301-767-3731.

Hiker-biker campsites are located along the towpath about every five to seven miles. All 30 sites are primitive and are free on a first-come, first-served basis. Facilities at the campsites include a chemical toilet, picnic table and grill. Drinking water is usually available from mid-April through November 15. Visitors are advised to bring water. Stay at hiker-biker campsites is limited to one night and eight people per site.

Golden Age and Golden Access Passport holders receive a 50 percent discount on camping fees when applicable. Golden Age passport can be purchased for a \$10 fee to U.S. citizens 62 and older. Golden Access passports are issued for free to U.S. citizens who are disabled and show proof of disability. Passports are available at the Great Falls Entrance Station.

Carderock Pavilion may be reserved by organizations by permit only. The pavilion has 26 picnic tables. Groups may reserve the pavilion for organized events from April 1 through October 31. Fees are \$150 from Mondays through Thursdays and \$250 from Fridays through Sundays and holidays. Call the Great Falls Fee and Permit Office at 301-767-3731 to make a reservation.

Winter Activities

Cross country skiing on the towpath allows participants a level and unobstructed trail for skiing. Dress for the weather and bring plenty of water. Be prepared for sudden weather changes.

Ice Skating is at your own risk except where prohibited by signs. Ice should be at least four inches thick. **Never skate alone.**

Snowshoeing on the towpath provides opportunities for glimpses at winter ecology and wildlife while walking on a level trail. Dress for the weather and bring plenty of water. Be prepared for sudden weather changes.

Recreational Opportunities by Milepost

*Commercial
services are
subject to
change*



Bike Repairs



Food



Picnic Table



Boat Ramp



Groceries



RV / Tent Camping



Canoe Ramp



Parking



Tent Camping only



Boat/Bike Rental



Public Phone



Visitor Center



Fee Charged

0.1 Thompson Boat House



30.8 Edward's Ferry



55.0 Brunswick



0.4 Georgetown



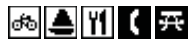
34.4 Turtle Run – parking 1.1 mile upstream at Whites Ferry



60.0 Sandy Hook – parking 4.9 miles upstream at Dargan Bend



3.1 Fletchers Cove



35.5 Whites Ferry



60.8 Harpers Ferry – parking 4.1 miles upstream at Dargan Bend



10.5 Carderock



38.2 Marble Quarry – parking 2.7 miles downstream at Whites Ferry



62.9 Huckleberry Hill – parking 2.0 miles upstream at Dargan Bend



11.0 Marsden Tract – group campground permit required. Parking 0.5 mile downstream at Carderock.



42.2 Monocacy Aqueduct



64.9 Dargan Bend



14.3 Great Falls



42.5 Indian Flats – parking 0.3 mile downstream at Monocacy Aqueduct



69.6 Antietam Creek



16.6 Swains Lock



44.6 Nolands Ferry



72.7 Lock 38 / Sharpsburg



22.8 Seneca



47.6 Calico Rocks – parking 0.5 mile upstream at Point of Rocks



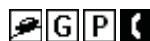
75.2 Killiansburg Cave – parking 1.4 mile upstream at Snyders Landing



26.1 Horsepen Branch – parking 1.1 mile upstream at Sycamore Landing



48.2 Point of Rocks



76.6 Snyders Landing



27.2 Sycamore Landing



50.3 Bald Eagle Island – parking 1.5 mile upstream at Lander



79.2 Horseshoe Bend – parking 1.7 mile upstream at Taylors Landing



30.5 Chisel Branch – parking 0.3 mile upstream at Edward's Ferry



50.8 Lander



80.9 Taylors Landing



82.7 Big Woods – parking 1.8 mile down-stream at Taylors Landing



85.5 Big Slackwater



88.1 McMahons Mill



90.9 Opequon Junction – parking 2.8 miles downstream at McMahons Mill



95.2 Cumberland Valley – parking 4.6 miles upstream at Williamsport



99.8 Williamsport



101.2 Jordan Junction – parking 1.6 mile downstream at Williamsport



109.0 Four Locks



110.0 North Mountain – parking 0.4 mile upstream at McCoys Ferry



110.4 McCoys Ferry



112.4 Fort Frederick State Park



113.8 Big Pool



116.0 Licking Creek Aqueduct – parking 0.7 mile upstream, adjacent to Indian Springs exit off I-70



120.6 Little Pool – parking 3.9 miles up-

stream at Little Tonoloway



124.0 Hancock



124.5 Little Tonoloway



129.9 Leopards Mill – parking 0.8 mile up-stream at Cohill Station.



130.7 Cohill Station



133.6 Cacapon Junction – parking 2.9 miles downstream at Cohill Station



139.2 Indigo Neck – parking 1.7 mile up-stream at Fifteenmile Creek



140.9 Fifteenmile Creek



144.5 Devils Alley – parking 3.6 miles downstream at Fifteenmile Creek



149.4 Stickpile Hill – parking 6.7 miles upstream at Paw Paw



154.1 Sorrel Ridge – parking 2.0 miles upstream at Paw Paw



156.1 Paw Paw



157.4 Purslane Run – parking 1.3 mile downstream at Paw Paw



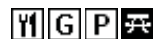
162.1 Town Creek



164.8 Potomac Forks – parking 1.9 mile upstream at Oldtown



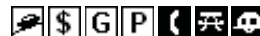
166.7 Oldtown (Battie-Mixon)



169.1 Pigmans Ferry – parking 2.4 miles downstream at Oldtown



173.3 Spring Gap



175.3 Irons Mountain – parking 0.2 mile upstream at North Branch



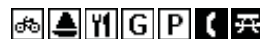
175.5 North Branch / Lock 74



180.1 Evitts Creek – parking 3.1 miles upstream at Cumberland



184.5 Cumberland / Canal Terminus



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

C&O Canal National Historical Park

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Applications can be turned in at any park visitor center or mailed to: Eastern National,
470 Maryland Drive, Suite 1; Ft. Washington, PA 19034.

C&O Canal Association

The C&O Canal Association is a citizens' association concerned with the conservation of the natural and historical environment of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin. The Association supports the National Park Service in its efforts to preserve and promote the 184.5 mile towpath and the open spaces within the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Membership is open to all.

Association activities include hikes, bike and canoe trips, a level walkers program, and special projects to support park activities. The Association provides opportunities for fellowship and education as well. Members receive a quarterly newsletter.

For more information about the C&O Canal Association, activities, and special projects, visit the www.candocanal.org or call 301-983-0825.

C&O Canal Association Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone Number: _____

Membership Rates (circle rate):

Individual \$15 Family \$20 Patron \$25

My C&O Canal Association badge should bear this name:

Second badge name (Patron or Family Membership)

Mail to:
C&O Canal Association
P.O. Box 366
Glen Echo, Md. 20812-0366

Only the Strong Survive

In this part of the country, the migration south often begins with the retired people around the neighborhood – we call them “snowbirds.” They don’t like the cold, snow, and dampness of winter, so they head south to places like Florida where it’s warm. Meanwhile, the rest of us put away our bicycles and hiking boots, grit our teeth and pull out our sweaters, coats and hats. Well, much the same way that people adjust to the wintry weather, the wildlife that surrounds us on the C&O Canal also has many different tricks for dealing with the frozen world of winter.

All along the C&O Canal, animals are getting ready for winter. Much the same as humans, animals get through winter by using different methods. As we think about the animals we most commonly see along the canal, we gain greater insight into the amazing things animals do to survive the most difficult of seasons. By looking more closely at the three particular creatures that we regularly see along the canal, we better understand what they have to go through and the methods they use to adapt.

Seeing a Great Blue Heron on the Potomac River as you stand on the towpath is one of the more thrilling sights for any visitor to the C&O Canal. Much like our “snowbirds,” the Heron leaves the winter weather behind and migrates south for the winter, many going as far as Central America or Cuba. Of course in order to survive such a long trip, the Heron must go on a feeding frenzy in the early fall, swooping down to scoop up fish on the Potomac at a harried pace. In order to better escape detection during its long journey, the Heron also sheds its brighter blue feathers for duller gray ones.

The most commonly seen of the wild animals that call the canal home is the white-tailed deer. The deer choose to stay in the local area but change their

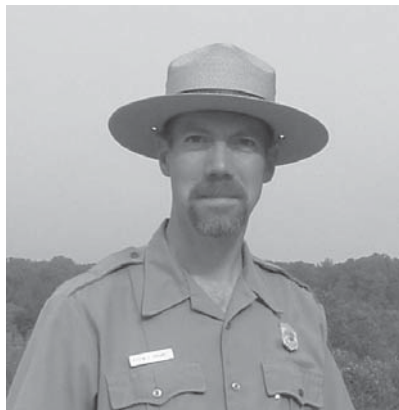


coats and their behavior to adapt. The reddish-brown coat of the white-tailed deer is replaced by a gray-brown winter one. The winter coat is not only a different color and coarser, but the hairs are hollow, allowing them to trap air and keep the deer warm by providing insulation against the cold. This insulation factor works so well that when snowflakes land on the backs of white-tailed deer, they don’t melt! Their summer coat isn’t the only thing they lose in winter – most deer shed their antlers during this time as well. And in order to better protect themselves, deer tend to congregate in herds, sometimes with more than a hundred per herd. This herding instinct is useful towards reproduction as well, since winter is mating season.

Of course, when many of us think about wildlife during the winter, we think of the black bears going into hibernation. But the black bear is not the only one who sleeps his way through winter. You can’t walk along a watered section of the canal without seeing a snapping turtle.

The turtles will hibernate during the winter months as well, burrowing down into the mud in places which don’t freeze. During this time where no food will be eaten, their body temperature will sink to a chilly 34 degrees, just above freezing and their bodies become still. Of course, because of their torpid state, they are unable to move and become even more vulnerable to predators, which could result in the worst fate for a wild animal trying to survive the winter – death.

Those who choose to don coats and hats and ski or snowshoe the towpath on a snowy winter day will enjoy quite a treat. Right after a winter snow is one of the best times to see signs of the wildlife by the tracks they leave in the snow, reminding us that even though the winter landscape can at times seem lifeless, there is a lot of hunting, sleeping, and hiding going on!



From the Superintendent

As I walk the canal and notice the last of the leaves have dropped, and see the stark silhouette of branches against the sky, I know winter is upon us. Winter brings both peril and beauty and with it a struggle for survival for both people and wildlife.

In the operational days of the canal, winter brought on a period of inactivity (see page 1). The canal was drained from late November to early spring, leading to a halt in canal boat transportation. This forced boatmen and locktenders to turn to other pursuits for sustenance and survival during the darkest days of the year.

For wildlife, winter brings its own dangers -- the struggle for survival is real and the animals commonly seen along the canal must employ different methods to get through the most challenging of the four seasons (page 7).

For visitors today, winter also presents its own paradox of danger and enjoyment. Ice skating and cross-country skiing are two popular winter activities, but keep in mind that skating on the canal is at your own risk and must be done only under the safest of conditions, when ice is four inches thick or more. When engaging in any winter activity, visitors should dress warmly and be aware of changing weather.

Winter brings a special opportunity to experience the solitude, peace and beauty of the canal from a unique perspective -- one we encourage everyone to enjoy safely.

Kevin Brandt
Superintendent

Park Visitor Centers

Georgetown Visitor Center (Mile 0.04)

202-653-5190

Closed for the season until April

Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center (Mile 14.3)

Open daily 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Entrance fees: \$3 per person, \$5 per vehicle

301-767-3714

Brunswick Visitor Center (Mile 50.8)

Open Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Sunday 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

301-834-7100

Williamsport Visitor Center (Mile 99.8)

Open Wednesday - Sunday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

301-582-0813

Hancock Visitor Center (Mile 124.0)

Closed for the season until Summer

301-678-5463

Cumberland Visitor Center (Mile 184.5)

Open daily 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

301-722-8226

Park Headquarters

Hagerstown, Md

Open Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

301-739-4200

Ranger Programs

Sights and Sounds of the Season

First and last Wednesdays and Saturdays of the month, Dec. 6 - Feb. 28, 2007

10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Great Falls Visitor Center

Join a park volunteer on a 2-hour nature walk and discover the beauty of the winter season at Great Falls on the C&O Canal.

From the Depths of the Ocean.....

Saturday, December 9

1:30 - 5 p.m., Great Falls Visitor Center

Join geologist Callan Bently to explore the constantly changing landscape that we call Great Falls and Mather Gorge. Hike will include the entire Billy Goat Trail and portions of the Berma Road. Wear sturdy shoes, dress for cold weather and bring water.

Mule Drawn Canal Boat Rides

Georgetown and Great Falls

Canal boat rides are suspended for the winter season and will resume in April 2007.

Experience history while traveling up the canal, locking through lift locks during this 1-hour canal boat ride. For more information, please contact the Great Falls Visitor Center.